



Australian Government
Australian Aged Care Quality Agency

Communique 9
Ninth Meeting of the Standards Guidance Reference Group

- The Standards Guidance Reference Group (SGRG) convened for a meeting on 8 November 2018.
- The Reference Group noted the passing of the Aged Care Reform Bill (Single Quality Framework) 2018 to provide for a single set of aged care quality standards to apply to all Commonwealth funded aged care providers. The Bill was passed by both houses on 10 September and received Royal Assent on 21 September 2018. The new Aged Care Quality Standards are now law and will be applied from 1 July 2019.
- Guidance material on the Aged Care Quality Standards was launched by CEO Mr Nick Ryan at the Better Practice Conference on 23 August 2018, attended by members of the Standards Guidance Reference Group.
- The Quality Agency website <https://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/standards/new-standards/guidance> includes the full suite of guidance for each standard, case studies and resources. Members were encouraged to promote these resources to their networks to support transition to the Aged Care Quality Standards in 2019.
- The Reference Group provided further feedback and resources for inclusion in the final draft of guidance material to be updated online in early 2019. It was noted that the Guidance resources would be updated annually.
- Members reviewed a draft Self-Assessment Tool for services to assess their performance against the new Quality Standards. It is envisaged that in completing the tool, providers will reflect on their organisation's understanding of the requirements of the Standards, and how these requirements are applied within the organisation to continuously improve consumer outcomes. The Reference group provided feedback on the draft which included:
 - having the tool available electronically and keeping the focus and language on continuous improvement and better practice.
 - integrating evidence, actions and continuous improvement plans to support ongoing organisational improvement under the new Standards.
 - providing a service example for each rating level.
- Members sought clarification on the transition to the new Quality Standards for services with reaccreditation falling close to 1 July 2019. The Quality Agency advised the notification that the reaccreditation application is due (7 months prior to accreditation expiry date) would provide clarity on applicability and transition arrangements for the new Standards.
- An update was provided on the Quality Agency's education activities to assist service providers to transition to new Standards. The national program has involved over 1800 participants to date with a further 63 sessions planned, accommodating a further 2000 participants. It was noted the Better Practice conference will be held in Darwin in May 2019, to further promote the new Standards to rural and remote service providers. Updates on the education program are at: <https://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/education>

- The Quality Agency advised of further work to implement the new Standards including end to end evidence collection, assessment and decision making under the new framework. These process testing and quality assurance activities are being piloted with the co-operation of a range of providers.
- Members were also provided with an update on the implementation of unannounced re-accreditation site audits. It was noted that 'Frequently Asked Questions' on unannounced visits are available on the Quality Agency's website at <https://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/processes/accreditation-and-re-accreditation/re-accreditation/moving-to-unannounced-re-accreditation-audits/frequently-asked-questions-faq>
- The Department of Health provided members with an update on the Clinical Governance Framework and the Open Disclosure Framework. An 'environmental scan' is being undertaken to understand frameworks currently in use; members' participation in this process was invited. A suggestion that General Practitioners and other health professionals are provided avenues to contribute was noted.
- The appointment of the Commissioner of the new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, Janet Anderson, who will commence on 1 January 2019 and the appointment of Associate Professor Michael Murray as the interim chief clinical advisor by the Department of Health was also noted.
- Members were advised that The Standards Implementation Evaluation Framework will be taken forward in 2019.
- Noting that this was the final meeting of the group the Chair reflected on the respectful, positive environment which has been central to the work of the SGRG and thanked everyone for their participation and significant contribution to the finalisation of the guidance to support the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Contact: Mary Murray
 Assistant Director Regulatory Performance
 Australian Aged Care Quality Agency
mary.murray@aacqa.gov.au